

ROBERT L. COWLES

MEMBER:
Joint Committee on Audit
Commerce, Utilities and Rail

TO: Senate Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, Biotechnology and Financial Institutions

FROM: State Senator Robert Cowles

DATE: September 27, 2007

RE: Assembly Bill 75

Chairman Sullivan and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today to encourage you to support Assembly Bill 75, regarding sharing information with National Guardsmen about possible health risks associated with prolonged exposure to depleted uranium (DU) munitions. I am pleased to join Representative Nelson and other legislators in sponsoring this important piece of legislation. This bill was introduced last session as Assembly Bill 832.

Assembly Bill 75 requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide information to veterans about DU and what testing and services may be available to them. The bill also requires DVA to provide that information to health care providers, department staff and county veterans service officers. The information is also required to be posted on the Internet.

There have been medical studies on the possible health effects of exposure to DU on military personnel. Some of the studies have demonstrated various negative health effects associated with prolonged exposure to DU, while other studies have not found such a link. Regardless of the lack of scientific consensus concerning the effects of exposure to DU, it is important that as much information as possible be shared with military personnel regarding potential risks, including information about benefits for which they may qualify.

This bill is supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the Department of Military Affairs. It is also supported by veterans groups such as the American Legion, as well as leaders of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Vietnam Veterans of Wisconsin. Thank you for your consideration and I hope I can count on your support.

Sincerely,


Senator Robert Cowles